

## CHINA AND ITS PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE POST-AMERICAN WORLD

**Tsai Tung Chieh, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan<sup>1</sup>**

**Tony Tai-Ting Liu, TamKang University, Taiwan**

### **Abstract**

Regardless of theoretical perspective, hierarchy is an ever present focus of international Relations, especially in terms of empire or hierarchy. Due to the structural impact of the Industrial Revolution since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it has become possible for one to find differences concerning the definition and behavior of hegemonies. This paper identifies three types of empires in history – classic, European and modern – based on the outcome and appearance of power as demonstrated by the hegemon or dominant power.

Looking towards the future, China indeed stands out. Nonetheless, China needs to respond to the following questions in its rise onto the world stage: (a) whether to conform to the assumptions of parity and overtake, or reduce the power differential with the incumbent hegemon (the United States); (b) to be in possession of a power vacuum (for example, East Asia) that can serve as a geopolitical foundation; (c) to use force effectively to demonstrate and increase its international status, but prevent from being dragged into unnecessary mudslides; (d) to come up with *grand strategies* characterized by long term vision instead of *great power strategies* aimed only at catching up. This paper adopts the approach of paradigm shift and China as the case study, and seeks to understand its strategic choices and potential influences in the world in the near future.

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<sup>1</sup>**Tsai Tung-Chieh** is a Professor at the Graduate Institute of International Politics, National Chung Hsing University. He is also the Dean of the College of Law and Politics and chairs the Center for Contemporary China Studies at the same university. Tsai's research interests include International Relations history, Chinese foreign policy and East Asia political economy.

**Tony Tai-Ting Liu** is an Assistant Professor at the Graduate Institute of Futures Studies, Tamkang University. He is also a Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary China Studies, National Chung Hsing University and held previous research positions at The University of Tokyo and The University of Tuebingen. His research interests include East Asia international relations and Chinese foreign policy.

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### **Modern World Order and the Emerging New Paradigm**

In the long history of international politics, while the existence of big entities such as empire, great power or hegemony is quite ubiquitous, these conceptual terms do not only describe the difference in power among states, they also serve as controllable variables. Many states in the previous categories often play active roles in intervention and arbitration, for example, making efforts to sanction or control both actual and potential challengers to everyday order.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of their reasons for rise and fall,<sup>2</sup> empires took various forms actually in history. This section aims to clarify the different character of empire through the concept of “paradigm” preached by Thomas Kuhn.

Based on the concept of “paradigm shift,” Kuhn made an effort to explain that the process of scientific (or ideational) evolution does not move forward through evolution but through revolution – the development of new thought and logic. In simple terms, paradigm shift denotes the change in human behavior, the breakthrough of new ideas, and the shift in values. With each paradigm shifting scientific revolution, scientists think themselves move closer to the truth.<sup>3</sup> Although Kuhn’s definition may be sketchy, for IR scholars, paradigms are generally defined as a set of hypothesis connected with secular values, with the aim of describing, explaining or predicting objective and subjective entities.<sup>4</sup> Despite the relatively conservative implication of “revolution” in the social sciences, against the backdrop of slow but certain process of evolution of human societies in history, one cannot neglect the necessity for new thinking in theoretical debates. Discussing about the empire is one such case.

In fact, no word resonates more strongly today than “empire,” the title of a literary sensation that has given a name to an enigmatic totality of money, power and culture.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, definitions of imperialism and empire are varied and controversial. Some observers argued that *imperium Romanum* was quite distinct from the modern term “imperialism,” and in comparison with modern empires, the Roman Empire was a product of very different political and economic forces.<sup>6</sup> A recent study suggests that Roman expansionism fits more readily into an analytical framework of state building rather than an anachronistic back-project of imperialism.<sup>7</sup> According to Stephen Howe, “... empires must by definition be big, and they must be composite entities formed out of previous separate units... diversity is their essence.”<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Joseph Colomer summed up the definition of “empire” as consisting of four characteristics: very large size in terms of both territory and population; absence of fixed or permanent boundaries; composed of diverse groups

and territorial units; and multilevel jurisdiction that often overlaps.<sup>9</sup> However, in a sense, one may argue that Colomer did more to stoke the debate on the definition of empire rather than resolve the issue of separate interpretations.

Besides “empire,” the term “hegemony” also provides testimony to the general debate. Kojin Karatani notes that in the current system premised upon the “world-economy” nexus, the empire cannot survive and is replaced by hegemony.<sup>10</sup> Although hegemonic states often endow themselves with the title of “empire,” realizations of the latter are often superficial. More importantly, regardless of whether empires exist, at least no state has come forth to confess its imperial status. In addition, while the concept of hegemony that has appeared since the Cold War sits in contrast with the traditional definition of empire in many ways, hegemony currently serves as the closest political form to the empire and offers various cases for study (the US and the Soviet Union). For the sake of convenience, we hypothesize that “hegemony is a broadly defined empire.” Such is the focus of the ensuing discussion that seeks to establish typologies from a historical perspective. This paper uses three imperial paradigms – classical, European, and modern – to examine how great powers interact with the international system (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Comparison of Imperial Paradigms**

	<b>Classical Empires (before 1498)</b>	<b>European Empires (1498-1945) *</b>	<b>Modern Empires (after 1945) **</b>
<b>representative states</b>	Macedonia, Roman, China, Mongolia	Spain, Netherlands (Dutch), Great Britain	United States
<b>unit characteristic</b>	traditional states based on hereditary succession	sovereign nation-states	complex network states
<b>leadership role</b>	individual hero	national hero	charismatic hero
<b>foundation of power</b>	military	military, economic	Military, economic, cultural
<b>economic characteristic</b>	nomadic, agricultural	industrial	knowledge industry
<b>reason for expansion</b>	limited security, individual desire	broad sensed security, market interest, superiority	market interest, secular values
<b>source of legitimacy</b>	forceful suppression, civilizational difference	international law	ideological identity
<b>policy emphasis</b>	conquest, hierarchical prestige	colonization, establishment of international norms, balance of	assimilation, conflict resolution***

		power	
<b>system characteristic</b>	hub and spoke	international law (sovereign) system	global network society
<b>power representation</b>	hierarchical political prestige	military triumph, leadership in institutional establishment	promotion of global regimes
<b>challenges</b>	corruption, military dilapidation	arms competition, economic stagnation	arms proliferation, clash of civilizations

\*1498 : Christopher Columbus's arrival on the American continent. Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in the same year.

\*\*1945 : Commencement of global confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union after WWII.

\*\*\*The listed policies denote the policy emphasis of various imperial models. However, this does not suggest the preclusion of similar policies in other models.

First, an important characteristic to be noted is the expansionism of classical empires. While the emergence of early classical empires might be related to a sudden desire or whimsical tendency for expansion, perhaps a more plausible reason might be tied to national security, or the hope to completely annihilate border challenges through continuous conquest. In turn, cushioned on military superiority (and perhaps cultural superiority as well), the conquering state spontaneously became the creator or defender of regional norms (for example, Roman law and China's tributary system) that served to consolidate imperial status. In contrast, modern European empires were closely related with the religious revolution and the development of capitalism in the late Middle Ages. The religious movement cloaked European expansion in humanitarianism and eventually became the foundation of idealistic diplomacy in later periods while the latter, capitalism, voiced the infinite material desire of human beings unabashed and became one of the origins of realistic foreign policy or globalization.<sup>11</sup>

Compared with classical empires, in certain respects, the aspiration of European empires exceeded the goal of national security. While many civil entrepreneurs actively participated in the expansion process, states (or governments) sometimes served only the mere role of passively defending commercial interests. More importantly, in the expansion process, European empires emphasized the realization of systemic norms (eg. treaty based international law) and were often exceedingly subjective and uncompromising in their establishment of norms, a phenomenon that hints at Europe's psyche of cultural superiority.<sup>12</sup> Following the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution near in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, aside from a desire to expand, for the first time in history, Europe was endowed with real capabilities to expand. Such

newfound strengths helped the European economy to break through its confines established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and merge the new regions into a global production chain centered on Europe.<sup>13</sup>

It is worth noting that two parallel worlds characterized the international system from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In Europe, the horizontal interaction model so called “balance of power” prevailed; Britain was merely a great power with stronger influence.<sup>14</sup> In terms of hierarchical interactions between European states and other regions, the dominant colonial states could all be regarded as empires in their respective sphere of influence while Britain reserved an indisputable leadership role.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast with the traditional tendency to observe international relations through the lens of balance of power, power transition theory (PTT) seems to offer stronger explanations of international order in some cases, particularly in terms of the rise and fall of European empires.<sup>16</sup> In contrast with traditional IR theories that presume the international structure as a stable establishment, power transition theory emphasizes the fluidity of the international structure. Supporters of the PTT argue that changes in power in the international structure should not be discredited as a dependent variable of international conflicts; the reason behind break out of conflicts is not unrelated to the development of power parity or overtaking between states.<sup>17</sup> Parity refers to the closing of the gap in power between the trailing state or potential challenger and the leading state or hegemony. In other words, the challenging state successfully completed the policy of catching up (which usually hints at economic growth leading to the increase in military and political influence).<sup>18</sup> As for “overtake,” the potential challenger not only closes the distance in power with the leading state, but may also surpass the capability of the existing hegemony through some sort of leaping development.<sup>19</sup>

When the pre-existing status quo power becomes dissatisfied with the existing rules of power, both the hegemon and the challenging state can initiate preventive or pre-emptive attacks, in order to acquire the dominant discourse in the future international order.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, while the problem of “power” is often at the root of international conflicts, the latter does not always revolve around the hegemon. Since the problem of power is prevalent and the international power structure resembles a hierarchical pyramid, theoretically, conflict can occur at any level of the structure. Tensions may exist even among middle and small powers.

On the other hand, besides highlighting the organic character of international structure and the fact that international conflicts can happen at any level, the power transition theory also breaks with traditional theories in its assumption that international

economic relations and political power relations are tightly intertwined. Such assumption in turn suggests that decisions to cooperate or compete often guide the interactions between politics and economics.<sup>21</sup> By adding economic considerations into international political behavior, the power transition theory also introduces several assumptions: (1) strong states may rely on the use of trade policies to change the preference of dissatisfied states; (2) while difficult to observe over a long period, the use of economic sanctions against dissatisfied states may be effective in the short run; (3) strong states will make efforts to maintain currency stability (domestic exchange rate and the international market) as they are the biggest beneficiaries of such condition; (4) most great powers will restrict the flow of key technologies to competing states in order to avoid the phenomena of parity or overtake. In short, the economic expansion of certain states will bring about reconstruction of the international structure and structural changes and power redistributions will increase the potential likelihood for conflict.<sup>22</sup>

### **The American Empire: Retrospect and Prospect**

Even though discussions on hegemony and empire do not necessarily have to revolve around the US, as the current hegemon, the US cannot escape attention. As generally understood, due to a high level of cultural connectivity with Europe, rapid industrialization, geographical proximity with Europe, strong social characteristics and emerging unscathed from the great wars, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the US joined the ranks of European states as also a great power finally (Schulzinger, 2002: 19-37). Then, after the Second World War, the US further established itself as a global superpower.

It is worth noting that the US is an exemplary example of a European empire with modern characteristics, which endows the US with a transitional character in the rise and fall of empires in history. For example, compared with Britain, US foreign policy clearly demonstrates continuity. In terms of economic affairs, the US continues to play the role of standard setter, defending liberal economic order while reconsolidating the gold standard as the Bretton Woods System.<sup>23</sup> Strategically, the US extended Britain's policy of maritime power versus continental power and self-righteously recognized itself as the dominant maritime power (though it is also a continental power actually). Geopolitically, the US considered a Soviet Union with the potential to take control of the world island as the main challenge of world order.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, one should also recognize the innovations in America's unique imperial policy or its modern characteristics. On the issue of legitimacy, in contrast with Britain, the US expended great efforts to shape and maintain the appearance of a "benevolent hegemon." For example, besides advocating self-determination and proclaiming itself as the world's first democratic state, the US also

defends the legitimacy of democratic politics.<sup>25</sup> Hence, succeeding economic liberalization and the establishment of international order, democratization became a policy focus that distinguished the US from British imperialism.

The modern empire also confronted challenges that stemmed from the emerging global society and implications of the Industrial Revolution. Global society brought forth cultural differences that challenge imperial power while influences of the Industrial Revolution (particularly the revolution in informatics and the spread of advanced technologies) undeniably increased the opposing capability of anti-imperialists guised as potential competitors, anti-globalists or terrorists. As a result, the clash of civilizations became an issue that the hegemon cannot dismiss when attempting to maintain its status; the promotion of secular values and global institutions naturally became the emphasis of US imperial policy.

In possession of absolute military (nuclear technology and global projection power) and economic advantages (over half of the world's industrial output and the largest gold reserve in the world), the US was an indisputable superpower in the 1950s. However, historical experiences suggest that empires are not everlasting and the US may not be an exception.<sup>26</sup> For example, after the 1970s, America's imperial status and policies began to deteriorate as a result of large scale arms race and global alliance competition with the Soviet Union and the domestic call for isolationism following the debacle in Vietnam.<sup>27</sup> Richard Nixon's proposal for retreat such as limited intervention and regional cooperation clearly exposed Washington's declining global influence and inability to meet multiple challenges.

Yet as *The Economist* editorial pointed out, "The United States bestrides the globe like a colossus... It dominates business, commerce and communications; its economy is the world's most successful, its military might second to none."<sup>28</sup> Collapse of the Soviet Union temporarily alleviated the US from the fear of imperial decline and encouraged some observers to anticipate the coming of a uni-polar age. For example, William Wohlforth thought that Washington's allies would continue to opt for protection under the US security umbrella.<sup>29</sup> Charles Krauthammer further emphasized that in the post-Cold War period, the US should refuse "to play just the docile international citizen because the new unilateralism recognizes the uniqueness of the uni-polar world we now inhabit, and thus marks the real beginning of American post-Cold War foreign policy."<sup>30</sup>

In such context, besides the US' continued maintenance of its superpower status in the beginning of the Cold War period, in terms of foreign policy, formal discussions on establishment of an empire began to appear.<sup>31</sup> For example, under the leadership of William Kristol and Robert Kagan, *Project for the New American Century* was

introduced with the goal of supporting America's aim to consolidate its empire.<sup>32</sup> However, neo-imperialist thought grounded in neo-realism was not the only voice in the American academia. Scholars such as William Hyland stressed that after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US has more opportunities to realize the foreign policy ideal centered on human rights.<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Clarke noted that while the US should reduce the frequency of intervention through military means, its position does not necessarily call for a return to isolationism.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, support for an increase in US activism on global affairs continues to be the leading voice in America. Under the assumption that the US is a uni-polar hegemon, most observers imagined Washington to take up the global role of balancing among different regional powers in order to maintain a strategic environment beneficial for American interests.<sup>35</sup>

However, as the US seemed to possess an invincible global status in the post-Cold War period, other states were naturally threatened by US predominance. The George W. Bush administration's pre-emptive policies further reinforced such worries.<sup>36</sup> As the US desisted from diplomacy, aid and international law and turned to military power, threats and financial institutions to realize foreign policy, not only did sounds of protest vibrated across all levels around the world, US actions prompted Joseph Nye to coin the term "soft power" as a reminder for Washington.<sup>37</sup> It is worth noting that though the US could be the last European hegemony and the first modern hegemony in the same time, it seemed to have neglected attributes that make it a modern empire. As previously mentioned, Washington's current method for maintaining status continues to resemble the European tradition of "suppression" (for example, military threat, economic sanction and legal institutions). One can argue that in a sense, such a method not only fails to address new developments but also contributes to the persistent high tide of anti-Americanism. Moreover, as the US tried to realize uni-polarity in the world, investment in the 2003 Iraq War and the 2008 global financial crisis ushered the US economy into recession and sowed the seeds for instability in the international system.

### **Debating China's Rise and Its Implications**

While *The Economist* acknowledged America's unique status in the post-Cold War period, the popular magazine also made the following observation:

*The one-superpower world will not last. Within the next couple of decades a China with up to 1 1/2 billion people, a strongly growing economy and probably a still authoritarian government will almost certainly be trying to push its*



*interests eastward into the Pacific and westward into Central Asia, whose oil and gas this energy-poor China will badly need. Sooner or later some strong and honest man will pull post-Yeltsin Russia together, and another contender for global influence will have reappeared on the scene.*<sup>38</sup>

In hindsight, after two decades, the prevision is fairly close to the mark.

As a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, Michel Oksenberg pointed out that for the first time since the emergence of the current (East Asian) regional system in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, groups of states are undivided.<sup>39</sup> Such a situation finally allowed China to consider national security away from the presumption of conflict and have an opportunity to engage all states. Coupled with an increase in economic and military influence, China received the chance to play a more active role while it reshaped its surrounding. Besides conditions that drove China to think that it was “rising in the world’s East,”<sup>40</sup> twenty years of miraculous double digit growth since open reforms and the Communist Party’s success in staving off the most recent wave of democratization have contributed to the world’s optimistic outlook on the future of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>41</sup>

Without a doubt, China’s economic takeoff was one of the biggest influences on global economic development over the past thirty years. Interestingly, such rapid growth might have also overrun China’s own expectations. For example, the CCP 13<sup>th</sup> National Congress Report in 1987 predicted that by the turn of the century, China’s GDP will be four times higher than 1980, yet the real figure turned out to be 6.55 times higher. In the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress Report in 2002, policymakers aimed to increase the Chinese economy by twofold by 2020 or an average growth rate of 7.2%. However, by 2006, China’s economy grew by 74.9% with the annual rate of growth achieving an impressive 9.8%. Furthermore, besides surpassing Japan to become the world’s leader in foreign reserve in 2006, China’s stock of foreign currency overtook the total reserve of G7 countries in 2008. By 2011, China was the second largest economy in the world.

Nonetheless, in the new century, China continues to face many problems despite its economic rise. Oded Shekar argues that China’s influence will eventually expand beyond its traditional regional scope, first extending to Central and Southeast Asia, and then to the Middle East through its demand for energy and to Africa through the provision of foreign aid.<sup>42</sup> Such actions are tantamount to China becoming a recognized global power. In the BRIC report, Goldman Sachs also noted that the Chinese economy will surpass Germany in 2008, Japan in 2015 (2011 in reality), the

US in 2039 and become the world's largest economy around 2041.<sup>43</sup> As Kenichi Ohmae observed, "in recent decades, while politicians, economists and investors around the world prayed for China's continued economic slumber, they also recognize the country's potential and anticipate a waking China to take over as the leading driver for the world economy."<sup>44</sup> Noting the positive effects of open reforms since the 1980s, China's achievement is arguably worthy of the title "miracle." Yet in terms of the negative implications, the Matthew Effect spurred on by regional developmental gaps also gave rise to discussions on the coming collapse of China,<sup>45</sup> which in turn feeds into the incessant academic debate between the China threat and the China factory.

While Steven Mosher's notion that "the role of Hegemon is deeply embedded in China's national dreamwork, intrinsic to its national identity, and profoundly implicated in its sense of national destiny" may not have hit the bull's eye with China,<sup>46</sup> at least in terms of negative historical memories and considerations for national interest, state leaders may be tempted to use the opportunity to improve China's national security and perhaps strive for stronger status and influence in the international community. Such is the argument for great power aspiration; economic power has become a "soft weapon" for China that cannot be disregarded. Many observers pointed out that with its world leading foreign reserve, China is one of the few countries that can provide financial relief. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) established in 2015 may be a good example.

After analyzing the evolution of imperial paradigms and debating the rise of great powers, the focus of discussions logically shifts to two questions: first, if China is really rising, has Beijing reflected on the phenomenon? And second, will China directly respond to the implications of paradigm shift mentioned above?

In reality, China did not seriously consider the topic of "grand strategy" until the turn of the century. Three factors may have contributed to such development: (1) commencing from the Cold War period, China sought to reconfigure and understand the future world order under a new structural environment in the international system; (2) based on the success of economic reform, Chinese leaders sought to envision the next stage of status changes in international relations; (3) Beijing reacted to the China threat theory and tried to search for countermeasures.

According to the mainstream perspective in China, the international system currently exudes an order of "one superpower and multiple great powers" (*yichaoduoqiang* 一超多强) and China should seek to play a more active role (Yu, 1998: 317-319). As Deng Xiaoping pointed out, "The world dominated by the US and the Soviet Union is changing... China is a pole in so-called 'multipolarity'... China

should not despise itself.”<sup>47</sup> In short, whether actions were adopted as pre-emptive strategies against containment by the West, preventive measures against domestic separatism, or steps towards the establishment of an international environment beneficial for consolidating open reforms, China’s hope and determination to become a pole or among the ranks of the (five) great powers provided support for many observers to see China as an “equal competitor” with the US in the future.<sup>48</sup>

Under the sophisticated background of the post-Cold War period and China’s development, the strategic logic of Beijing is as follows. First, after “crossing the river by feeling the stones,” China would gradually confirm market economy (with Chinese characteristics) as the long term guideline for improving the country’s comprehensive national power. Second, China recognized that the US would fail to consolidate its unilateral policies. Hence global order would move towards power redistribution and the ensuing multi-polarity would provide China with a “strategic opportunity” to improve its international status.<sup>49</sup> Finally, regardless of how China seeks to take advantage of the strategic opportunity, its rise seems unstoppable. Therefore, more importantly, China should ponder over ways to embrace a broader international outlook and make use of the current international environment and its national power in an effort to completely reverse the dilemmas of history and economic development in the past hundred years or so. Such is the main departing point for discussions on China’s grand strategy.

According to a RAND report jointly authored by Michael Swaine and Ashley Tellis in 2000, while “great power self-image” occupies a central place in the heart and mind of the Chinese leadership, in the long term, its grand strategy leans towards introversion instead of expansion.<sup>50</sup> China is quite restraint on the use of force and would only adopt such option after very careful calculations. On the other hand, China is currently pushing for a highly pragmatic strategy that tries to distill as much ideological coloring as possible. China’s goal is to increase its participation in the international community under the precondition of maintaining good relations with most great powers. However, 2020-25 remains a critical period for China to slowly adjust its strategy from passivity to activity. In short, Swaine and Tellis’ study on China’s grand strategy largely conforms to real developments and provides observers with a good source of reference for examining the future of China’s imperial policy.

Regardless of whether China continues to rise, it is worth noting that the key to the country’s successful transformation into a hegemon lies in its conformity to the characteristics of a modern empire, especially in terms of cultural influence. On the point, China has rode the global wave of interest on the *Art of War* and *hanyu*, derailed from its traditional anti-revolutionary stance and invested huge efforts in the

establishment of Confucius Institutes across the world to promote Chinese culture. On the other hand, through an examination of the slogans – rise, great power rise, peaceful rise, peaceful development, harmonious development and harmonious world – and recent efforts towards the study and promotion of “public diplomacy,” China is actively in search of an image that can be widely accepted.

Nonetheless, the following conditions are also necessary for China’s successful rise: (a) conform to the assumptions of parity and overtake, or reduce the power differential with the incumbent hegemon (the US); (b) be in possession of a power vacuum (for example, East Asia) that can serve as a geopolitical foundation; (c) use force effectively to demonstrate and increase its international status but prevent from being dragged into unnecessary mudslides; (d) come up with *grand strategies* characterized by long term vision instead of *great power strategies* aimed only at catching up; (e) establish a positive image by providing evidence for conflict resolution and conforming to the assumptions of a modern empire. Answers are yet to be found for the above demands.

### **Conclusion: The Next Empire?**

As pointed out in the opening paragraph of this paper, when observing the development of international relations, one cannot be confined to recent or current changes in the system but should look back into the long historical process for more guidance. In this discussion, the authors attempt to partially apply the concept of “paradigm shift” and break down the phenomenon of “empire” into different categories. Turning towards the future, the following points may be worth noting:

- (a) *From the perspective of paradigm shift, the issue of America’s decline is hard to evaluate because the phenomenon may be caused by short term factors.*

Through the lens of European empires, arms competitions that led to financial and economic overload was often the key to the fall of great powers. Despite the fact that in the short run, perhaps no country has the capability to commence an arms race with the US, economic stagnation as a result of the subprime crisis constitutes a major threat to US hegemony. In terms of modern empires, the clash of civilizations is a critical challenge against the legitimacy of US global leadership.

- (b) *Similar to historical evidences, the US will face the challenge of decline. The problem is how the US will terminate its hegemony.* In certain respect, while the potential decline of the US is undeniable, yet over-focusing on the problem may lead to an excessively subjective logical trap similar to the thesis on the collapse of China. Precisely due to short term factors that have

an effect on the US, it remains to be observed whether the US will follow the path tread by declining European powers (ie. inability to meet the pressure of war) or transform into a modern empire first before creating a new paradigm for decline.

- (c) *Regardless of which power(s) succeeds the US as the next hegemon, paradigm shift will remain as a useful concept for examining its logic for development and constraining factors.* Regardless of whether the US transforms into a modern empire, the inherent hegemon cannot avoid direct confrontations with the constraints of a new paradigm. The main source for such constraints may stem from an “unprecedented global structure.” In the new context, when the interplay between the hegemon and other actors completely spread across the world, future empires are likely to be challenged by greater cultural differences. The use of force may become an ineffective measure that falls short of responding to the heart of problems.
- (d) *As a new candidate for hegemony, when pondering over the establishment of a rising strategy, China should be wary not to neglect the constraints of a new paradigm.* While one cannot deny China’s potential to become a hegemon in the future, the key to its success continues to lie in whether Beijing understands the concept of paradigm discussed in this paper. On the surface, phrases such as “peaceful rise” or “harmonious world” certainly respond to the queries of a new paradigm. Yet the key remains whether such claims are merely rhetorical strategic actions or heralds of China’s determination for change. Furthermore, if China aspires to success, it must step up its pursuit for “institutional innovations” that provide testament for China’s ability to provide the public good of conflict resolution.

In short, in an age of high instability, all decision makers should be keen on making more cautious observations about potential developments of future global order in order to generate more rational responses. Such is our most humble wish.

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<sup>1</sup> Some theorists of hegemonic stability seem to emphasize the hegemon’s role in maintaining economic order but not political order. See Charles Kindleberger, “Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 25 (1981), 242-259; Robert Keohane, “The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regime, 1967-1977,” in Ole. Holsti, Randolph Siverson and Alexander George eds., *Change in the International System* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 131-162.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987); Kenneth Oye, “Constrained Confidence and the

Evolution of the Reagan Foreign Policy,” in Kenneth Oye and Donald Rothchild eds., *The Reagan Era in American Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little Brown), 3-40.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 96.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick James, *International Relations and Scientific Progress: Structural Realism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 67.

<sup>5</sup> Gopal Balakrishnan ed., *Debating Empire* (London: Verso, 2003), vii.

<sup>6</sup> David Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Armin Eich and Peter Eich, “War and State-Building in Roman Republican Times,” *Scripta Classica Israelica*, 24 (2005), 1-33.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Josep Colomer, *Great Empires, Small Nations: The Uncertain Future of the Sovereign State* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Kojin Karatani, *Diguo De Jiegou: Zhongxin Zhoubian Yazhoubian* (Taipei: PsyGarden, 2015), 201.

<sup>11</sup> Some observers consider religion not only as a factor for expansion in the process of establishment of early empires but also a source of legitimacy. See Majid Tehranian, *Global Communication and World Politics: Domination, Development and Discourse* (New York: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to other Culture in the Imperial Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System, Vol.3* (New York: Academic Press, 1989), 129. Although colonial expansion of the British Empire – the first truly global hegemon – can be traced to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century did Britain establish its status in the European or global system. This comment refers to the dual revolution in economics (Industrial Revolution) and politics (constitutional reform) Britain completed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. See W. A. Speck, *A Cambridge Concise History of Britain, 1707-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Kennedy points out that as a result of over emphasis on the non-productivity of the military, “by the middle of Queen Victoria’s reign, though Britain’s economic performance was spectacular, it was also the period with the lowest mobility for war since the House of Stuart.” See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly J. Silver, *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> The theory was first introduced by A.F.K. Organski in the volume *World Politics* (1958). In contrast with the theory of balance of power, the power transition theory presumes that absolute parity is hard to accomplish, hence continuous power competitions is a common phenomenon.

<sup>17</sup> A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Manus Midlarsky, *The Onset of World War* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988); Ronald Tammen, Jacek Kugler, Douglas Lemke, Alan Stem, Mark Abdollahian, Carole Alsharabati, Brian Efirid, and A.F.K. Organski, *Power Transition: Strategies for the 21 Century* (New York: Chatham House Publisher, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Moses Abramovitz, *Thinking about Growth and other Essays on Economic Growth*

*and Welfare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 220-242.

<sup>19</sup> Elise Brezis, Paul Krugman and Daniel Tsiddon, "Leapfrogging in International Competition: A Theory of Cycles in National Technological Leadership," *American Economic Review*, 83 (5) (1993), 1211-1219.

<sup>20</sup> In the First World War, though many observers merely looked at the winners and losers and recognized Germany as the culprit of the event, in reality, the war might be a preventive war deliberately initiated by Britain to suppress Germany's potential to catch up.

<sup>21</sup> Tammen et al., *op. cit.*, chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup> K. J. Holsti also thinks that in the period 1648-1815, at least in terms of the number of cases, economic tensions and disputes gradually became the main reason for interstate war in Europe. See K. J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>23</sup> Although Britain pursued an "internationalization" strategy to counter America's postwar economic influence, its efforts fell short. See Michael Hudson, *Super Imperialism: the Origin and Fundamentals of U.S. World Dominance* (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> In certain respect, US containment strategy against the Soviet Union in late 20<sup>th</sup> century was nearly identical with Britain's policy against Russia in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. See Robert Schulzinger, *U.S. Diplomacy since 1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Besides the question of legitimacy when defending the principle of democracy, the US also hoped to establish its cultural superiority in the process. Such behavior has sometimes led to criticisms of "cultural hegemony" or "cultural imperialism" against the US.

<sup>26</sup> Organski and Kugler, *op. cit.*; Midlarsky, *op. cit.*; Richard Rosecrance, "Long Cycle Theory and International Relations," *International Organization*, 41 (1987), 288-296.

<sup>27</sup> George Modelski, *Exploring Long Cycle* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1987); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>28</sup> "America's World," *The Economist*, October 23, 1999, 15.

<sup>29</sup> William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," in Michael Brown, Owen Cote, Sean Lynn-Jones and Steven Miller eds., *America's Strategic Choices* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 305, 309.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "The New Unilateralism," *Washington Post*, June 8, 2001, 29.

<sup>31</sup> The concept of neo-imperialism is generally recognized to have its root in Robert Cooper's 2002 commentary "Why we still need empires." Cooper proposed that the current world needs a new form of imperialism, one led by postmodern states in the West that adopt dual standards in their treatment of premodern states (partly formed by former colonial states) and traditional modern states (such as China and India). Cooper argued that neo-imperialist policies should be pursued for the sake of international security; premodern states are the roots of current disorder and threat. Yet it is worth noting that Cooper's professed empire was the EU and not the US.

<sup>32</sup> Kevin Baker, "American Imperialism, Embraced," *New York Times Magazine*, 9 (2001), 53-54.

<sup>33</sup> William Hyland, "America's New Course," *Foreign Affairs*, 69 (2) (1990), 7.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Clarke, "The Conceptual Poverty of U.S. Foreign Policy," *The Atlantic*

*Monthly* (1993), 54-66.

<sup>35</sup> A. Cohen et al, "Making the World Safe for America," in Kim Holmes and Thomas Moore eds., *Restoring American Leadership: A U.S. Foreign and Defense Policy Blueprint* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1996), 43.

<sup>36</sup> Stephen Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Nye, "The Changing Nature of World Power," *Political Science Quarterly*, 105(2) (1990), 177-192; "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, (80) (1990), 153-171.

<sup>38</sup> "When the Snarling's Over," *The Economist*, March 13, 1999, 17.

<sup>39</sup> Michel Oksenberg, "China: A Tortuous Path onto the World's Stage," in Robert Pastor ed., *A Century's Journey: How the Great Powers Shape the World* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 325.

<sup>40</sup> The comment was made by China's former Minister of Foreign Affairs Qian Qichen in summation of the country's diplomatic accomplishments in 1993. See Yan Xuetong, *Zhongguo Guojia Liyi Fenxi* (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Press, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); Gerald Segal, "Does China Matter?" *Foreign Affairs*, (78) (1999), 29-32.

<sup>42</sup> Oded Shekar, *The Chinese Century* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Jim O'Neill, Dominic Wilson, Roopa Purushothaman, and Anna Stupnytska, *How Solid are the BRICs?* Global Economic Paper, No.134 (December 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Kenichi Ohmae, *Zhongguo Chuzuzhong* (Taipei: Commonwealth Publishing, 2002), 20.

<sup>45</sup> Gordon Chang, *The Coming Collapse of China* (New York: Random House, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> Steven Mosher, *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Deng Xiaoping, *Deng Xiaoping Wenxuan: Yijuanben* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 1996), 463.

<sup>48</sup> Du Gong, *Zhuanhuanzhong de Shijie Geju* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1992), 7.

<sup>49</sup> Chen Peiyao and Xia Liping, *Xinshiji Jiyuqi yu Zhongguo Guoji Zhanlue* (Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2004).

<sup>50</sup> Michael Swaine and Ashley Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000).